

Summoning the Divine Meditation: St. George and Prince Philip



Left: St. George; Right: Prince Philip's Cap on his Funeral Bier. This Summoning Meditation honors two worthy and faithful servants: St. George and Prince Philip. Many of us were touched with the poignant and carefully imagined funeral service created by Prince Philip. Here is some information about both of these faithful Christian servants. I have incorporated several

of the funeral readings in this meditation.

1. St. George lived during the 3rd century and died in Palestine [now Lod, Israel.) His feast day is April 23. An early Christian martyr, he became the ideal of martial valor and selflessness who during the Middle Ages. He is the patron saint of England and of Georgia and is venerated in these faith traditions: Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Anglican. None of George's life or deeds can be established, but tradition holds that he was a high ranking Roman officer, who was tortured and decapitated under Diocletian's persecution of Christians in 303 A.D. His remains were taken to what is now Israel, the homeland of his mother, and were later transferred to the church that was built in his name there. He was frequently depicted as a youth wearing knight's armor with a scarlet cross. Various relics reportedly are housed in both Western and Eastern churches worldwide. St. George's Chapel of Windsor Castle, for example, is said to have once held two fingers, part of the heart.

2. Faith and Good Works of Prince Philip. Philip was baptized in the Greek Orthodox Church. He became an Anglican when he married Queen Elizabeth, the supreme governor of the Church of England. In the 1960s, he established St. George's House, a religious study center at the Royal Family's Windsor Castle seat, where he would join clergy, academics, business people and politicians to discuss matters affecting the world. He was a regular visitor to Mount Athos, a monastic community and religious sanctuary in Greece, and was a long-time patron of the Templeton Prize, a lucrative award for contribution to life's spiritual dimension

Philip also served as patron of the Worldwide Fund for Nature, which was rooted in faith. In 1986, he organized a summit where representatives of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism pledged to protect the environment. He said at the time that *a new and powerful alliance has been forged between the forces of religion and the forces of conservation*. Regarding Philip's respect for faith, Inderjit Singh, a prominent British Sikh leader, said the Duke had a strong knowledge of Sikhism and contributed to the understanding and harmony between differing faith communities. Said Singh of the Prince: '*He recognized what we should all recognize....We are all of one common humanity.*

The Casket Drape

In 1946, Philip gave up his Greek title and became a British citizen, taking his mother's anglicized name, Mountbatten. His casket is draped with his personal flag according to Philip's wishes. The Mountbatten family is represented on the standard, alongside the castle from the arms of the City of Edinburgh since he became Duke of Edinburgh when he married. The Greek white cross insignia can be seen on the upper right corner of the flag adorning Prince Philip's casket, as it forms part royal standard. The duke's naval cap and Royal Navy officer's sword were also laid on top of his coffin.



PSALM 104. Philip chose Psalm 104 to be sung at his funeral. The main subject of the psalm is the order of the world and the sovereignty of the God who created and maintains it. This

subject in turn instills confidence that God can and will order the lives of those who seek God by keeping them in God's purpose and away from evil. Below is a link to the Anglican version of the Psalm as well as a You-Tube link to the performance of the Psalm at Prince Philip's funeral.

Psalm 104: *Praise the Lord, O my soul!*

- 1. Read.** Link to Psalm 104: <http://chantblog.blogspot.com/2010/10/anglican-chant-vi-lincoln-cathedral.html>. Written as Anglican Chant.
- 2. Listen.** Performance of Psalm 104 at Prince Philip's funeral. You-Tube, 5:15 min.<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CALiGDILADE>

Miracle of St. George over the Dragon

Anonymous 15th C. Triptych from Novgorod, Moscow.



Explanation

Top level. The top middle presents the Crucified Christ as the Virgin Mary (left) & the beloved disciple St. John (right) mourn Jesus. A haloed angel frames either side of the Crucifixion scene; they are writing the legend of St. George. Below **middle panel** below the Christ presents the valiant St. George, his flag and his steed. **Left side:** Below the angel is a noble woman, who has trapped a small dragon. The square below presents St. George slaying the dragon. The bottom panel presents nobles venerating the garment of St. George. **Right side.** Below the angel, the torturers pierce the side of Christ. In the next panel, St. George is shown on the torture rack. The bottom panel displays his severed head. **Note:** Below is a link to the icon; you can easily magnify the various Icon compartments.

<https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/triptych-with-scenes-from-the-life-of-st-george-aragon-schoolof/mQGPrHsY8NUwQ?hl=en&ms=%7B%22x%22%3Ao.73047192?hl=en&ms=%7B%22x%22%3Ao.7304719283970712%2C%22%22%3Ao.867950428025497%2C%22%22%3A11%2C%22size%22%3A%7B%22width%22%3Ao.5203417412530512%2C%22height%22%3Ao.21076504384638645%7D%7D>

SELECTIONS FROM THE FUNERAL OF PRINCE PHILIP

Ecclesiasticus 43. 11-26

Read by the Dean of Windsor on the occasion of Prince Philip's Funeral

--Look at the rainbow and praise its Maker; it shines with a supreme beauty, rounding the sky with its gleaming arc, a bow bent by the hands of the Most High. His command speeds the snow storm and sends the swift lightning to execute his sentence. --To that end the storehouses are opened, and the clouds fly out like birds. By his mighty power the clouds are piled up and the hailstones broken small. The crash of his thunder makes the earth writhe, and, when he appears, an earthquake shakes the hills

--At his will the south wind blows, the squall from the north and the hurricane. He scatters the snow-flakes like birds alighting; they settle like a swarm of locusts.

--The eye is dazzled by their beautiful whiteness, and as they fall the mind is entranced. He spreads frost on the earth like salt, and icicles form like pointed stakes.

--A cold blast from the north, and ice grows hard on the water, settling on every pool, as though the water were putting on a breastplate. He consumes the hills, scorches the wilderness, and withers the grass like fire. Cloudy weather quickly puts all to rights, and dew brings welcome relief after heat.

--By the power of his thought he tamed the deep and planted it with islands. Those who sail the sea tell stories of its dangers, which astonish all who hear them; in it are strange and wonderful creatures, all kinds of living things and huge sea-monsters. By his own action he achieves his end, and by his word all things are held together.

Dean of Windsor, Register of the Most Noble Order of the Garter reads:

--Lord, who didst give to thy servant Saint George grace to lay aside the fear of man, and to be faithful even unto death: Grant that we, unmindful of worldly honor, may fight the wrong, uphold thy rule, and serve thee to our lives' end; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

--God save our gracious Sovereign and all the Companions, living and departed, of the Most Honorable and Noble Order of The Garter. Amen.\

--God of the spirits of all flesh, we praise thy holy name for thy servant Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, who has left us a fair pattern of valiant and true knighthood; grant unto him the assurance of thine ancient promise that thou wilt ever be with those who go down to the sea in ships and occupy their business in great waters.

--And we beseech thee that, following his good example and strengthened by his fellowship, we may at the last, together with him, be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



The Archbishop of Canterbury reads:

--Lord God, when thou givest to thy servants to endeavor any great matter, grant us also to know that it is not the beginning, but the continuing of the same unto the end, until it be thoroughly finished, which yieldeth the true glory; through him, who for the finishing of thy work laid down his life, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

--Almighty God, Father of all mercies and giver of all comfort: Deal graciously, we pray thee, with those who mourn; that casting every care on thee they may know the consolation of thy love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As the Coffin is lowered into the Royal Vault, the Commendation reads: GO forth upon thy journey from this world, O Christian soul; In the name of God the Father Almighty who created thee; In the name of Jesus Christ who suffered for thee; In the name of the Holy Spirit

who strengtheneth thee; May thy portion this day be in peace, and thy dwelling in the heavenly Jerusalem. AMEN. [Above: Queen Elizabeth sits alone.]